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## THE BED-ROOM AND ITS OFFICES.

BY MARY GAY HUMPHREYS.

THERE is a country house at Newport, the bedrooms of which are a model for all houses on the same extensive scale. The house is a large frame cottage, in watering-place language, in the shape of a Maltese cross. In the centre is an immense hall in which an ordinary sized house could be set. The bedrooms occupy the second and third stories, and from the shape of the house it may be seen that each story contains four oblong rooms flanked on each side by smaller rooms, and that each room contains windows opening on two sides, thus getting the greatest amount of air and light.

Each room is furnished in chintz and has some marked feature either of design or color. The chintz is of the liveliest, gayest description, and the walls are either hung with it or paper of the same design has been imported. One of the larger rooms is upholstered in a dark red chintz with Japanese designs. The wall is painted plain red, and a frieze has been made by an ingenious arrangement of folding fans. To the ordinary furniture of a bedroom in each is a dressing table and glass draped in chintz, a horizontal mirror over the mantels, its plain wooden frame covered with puffs of chintz, and chintz drapery hangs from the mantel.

Of course each room is distinguished by different minor arrangements, such as toilet articles and the various accessories of a bedroom, as well as by the color, but the general plan is that given.

Each room has a small dressing room attached, in which is all the more serious apparatus for the toilet. These little rooms are daintily appointed in every respect, and contain the closets which serve as wardrobes.

The furniture of these rooms, except in the Japanese rooms, is of ash with no pretensions to anything but comfort. In the Japanese room the furniture is of mahogany, and the bed is a dignified structure with a half canopy and curtained like a bed of State. I know of no house the arrangement of which is more simple and comfortable, but which more clearly shows what resources and tastes have commanded its simplicity.

No bedroom should be sombre. Sanitary reasons underlie what seems to be merely a matter of preference. It is pretty well understood that dark wall papers absorb not only light but infectious qualities in the atmosphere. On this score wall paper is considered by the best medical authorities as objectionable, and rooms that have been repapered after having had in them contagious diseases, it has been found that years afterwards in removing the paper from the walls the germs have been sufficiently preserved to reproduce the infection. This, however, is a risk that is rarely run in private life. The papers that are now made for bedrooms are so attractive that one may be well tempted to use them. What are known as the Morris designs—vines and flowers over surfaces broken by lattice-like bars—have been the suggestion for the greater number of the bedroom papers that are now produced. There is one advantage in these that is worth considering, and that is what is known as the repeat of the design is so dexterously concealed that in illness or nervousness they have not that element of torment that every one, who has had the misfortune of illness, can recall in the old-fashioned wall papers.

Dados are not used in bedrooms; but the frieze is of importance. Tinted walls are to be preferred even to artistic wall papers. I have in mind a delicately tinted pink wall, with a deep frieze of wall paper in luscious

pink and cream roses on a gilt ground, with a small gilt molding between the field and frieze. Painted walls are cleaner, healthier, and in every way to be preferred. Light tints are, of course, most desirable and the wood work if painted can carry out the same scheme. For example: the walls are of a faint pink; the frieze has a gilt molding, a deeper tinted pink band leading into

amiss if one has any sense of color. It is impossible to escape any one of these combinations in the cretonne and chintz that are now manufactured. One of the greatest causes for thankfulness is that good designs and coloring can be found in the cheaper priced materials as well as in the more expensive, for cretonne and other cotton goods, by no means imply cheapness. Some of the handsomest bedrooms in this city are upholstered in cretonnes. The fitting charm of every bedroom is its freshness, and nothing except white draperies, that are for the most part impossible, gives this sense of freshness that is found in cheerful cretonnes.

Another thing in its favor is that it can be used for all the draperies of the room. In some of the older houses in this city, such as are found on Washington Square and Second Avenue, the bedrooms preserve the same old-fashioned air they have done for a quarter of a century.

Long cretonne curtains edged with a fringe of the same, hang from the windows. The tall high posted, canopied beds are surrounded with cretonne curtains, not omitting the old-fashioned valances which were the pride of our grandmothers. There is a wonderful fascination in such rooms to young people, lying half under among the mysterious shadows of the curtains made visible by flickering fire-light.

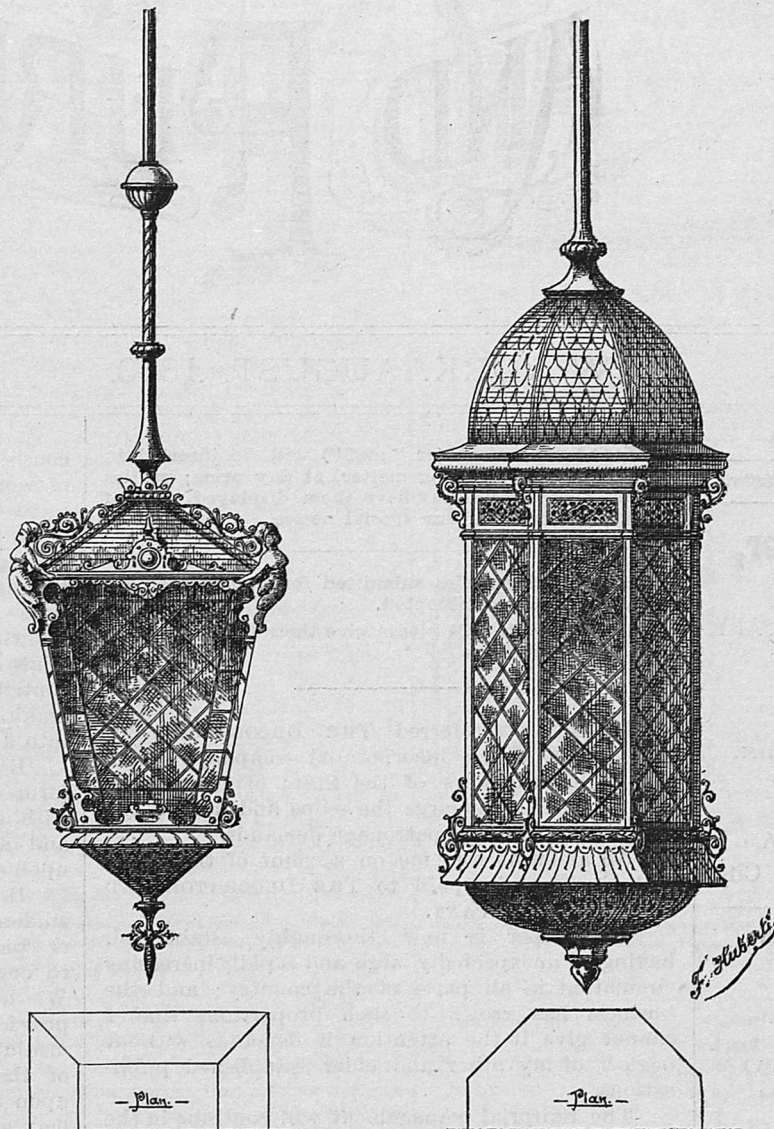
In more luxurious rooms these draperies are copied in the richest of stuffs. Some of the recently decorated bedrooms in this city are like state apartments. The beds are placed at one end on a dais in regal state. Their magnificence of woods and carving are made more magnificent by rich hangings. Such a one has curtains of silver gray satin bordered by pink plush, richly embroidered in gold and colors. It is scarcely worth while to dwell on such elegancies since they are the concern of the very few, while the equal and more accessible charms of simpler materials are within the reach of the many.

Sanitary considerations also, as well as modern taste advise wooden floors inlaid, oiled or stained, and made further habitable by rugs or rug carpets. The virtue lies not only in the freedom from dust but also in pleasing the eye by the broken surface of the floor. If rugs are not desired, and there are many good people who cannot disassociate rugs and bare floors from discomfort, it is better to have the carpet made leaving a margin of a foot or two of the floor uncarpeted, not only because it adds to the general appearance of the room, particularly if it is bordered, but because it can be more frequently removed.

The color of the carpet should take its tone from the walls, and may be a little deeper. None of the more expensive carpets are prettier or have better designs than the modern Ingrains, which are designed especially for this purpose. But in this, as in all furnishing, it is a certain artistic unity that is desired, and to this the costliness of the materials is subordinate. How clearly this is felt among the manufacturers is seen in the rapidity with which every new color or form is reproduced in other ways. It is curious to observe

this Spring how completely this is done in toilet sets for the bedrooms.

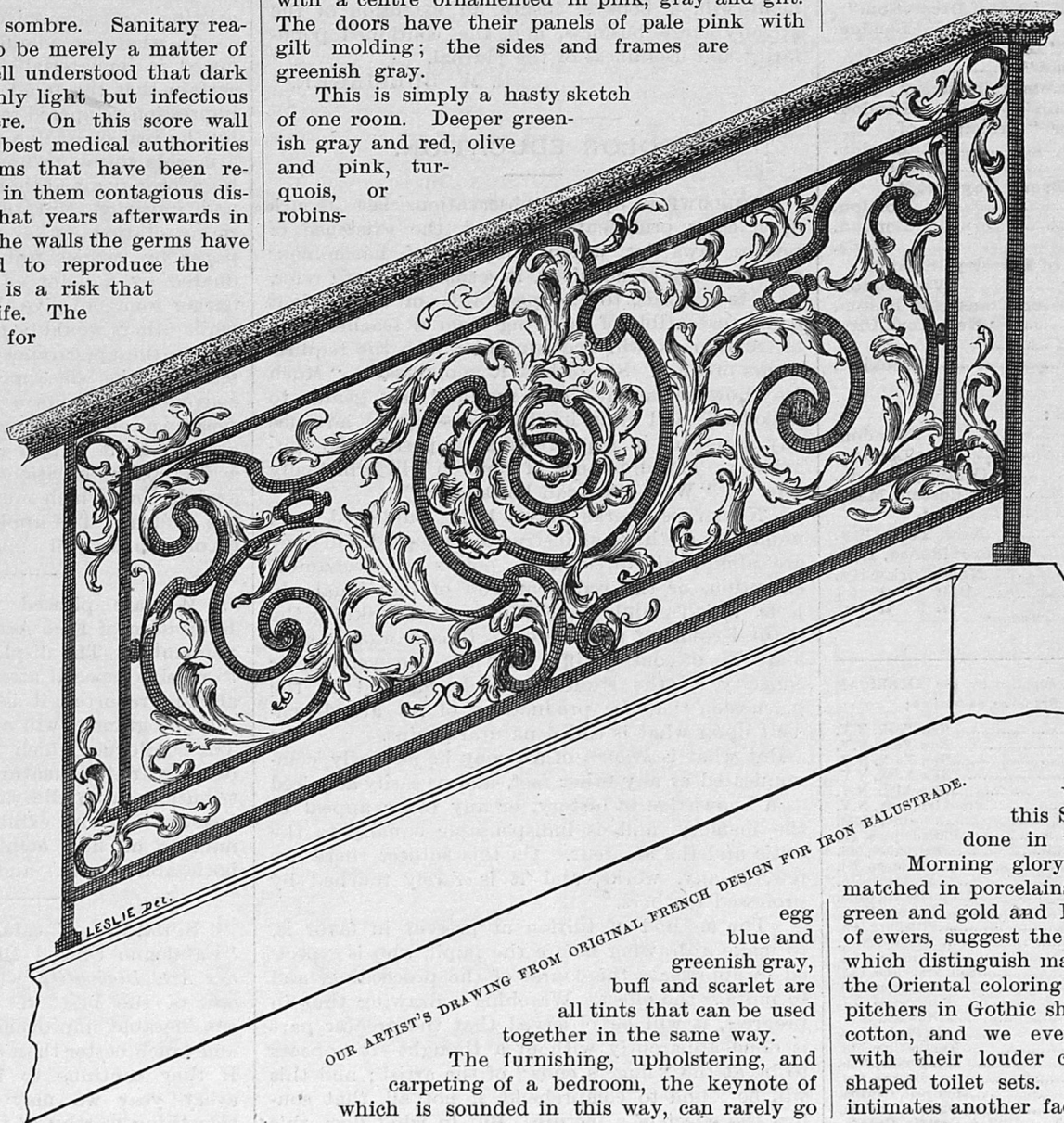
Morning glory and rosebud chintzes are matched in porcelains. Canton china, glittering in green and gold and Persian water bottles instead of ewers, suggest the Chinese and Japanese forms which distinguish many of the best cretonnes, and the Oriental coloring of others. Morris bowls and pitchers in Gothic shapes match Morris designs in cotton, and we even have the cruder pattern, with their louder coloring repeated on awkward shaped toilet sets. This care and consideration intimates another fact, that there is emphatic and



DESIGN FOR HALL LAMP AND LANTERN, BY F. HUBERTI.

the cove which is faint pink and greenish gray separated by gilt lines; the ceiling is faint pink with a centre ornamented in pink, gray and gilt. The doors have their panels of pale pink with gilt molding; the sides and frames are greenish gray.

This is simply a hasty sketch of one room. Deeper greenish gray and red, olive and pink, turquoise, or robins-



OUR ARTIST'S DRAWING FROM ORIGINAL FRENCH DESIGN FOR IRON BALUSTRADE.

The furnishing, upholstery, and carpeting of a bedroom, the keynote of which is sounded in this way, can rarely go







growing objection to plumbing introduced into bed chambers. A practical plumber tells me that in his own house all the plumbing in the upper stories is confined to the bath rooms, and that he does not even allow a water pipe in the bath tub, so little faith has he in the prevention of sewer gas by the most approved methods in plumbing. The manifest convenience of the stationary stand and its hot and cold water is not compensated for by daily languor and possible illness brought about by bad air. Even with the plumbing in an adjoining dressing room the danger is not obviated.

The modern washstand is constructed in view of the same conviction. It has its broad wooden slab in order to give ample room for all the conveniences of the toilet, and its irregular compartments below are not more sightly than they are useful nooks and corners. I have seen washstands that are absolutely poetical. Such a one had bands of carving showing aquatic plants, and painted tiles in the back in which swans were breast deep among lilies and reeds.

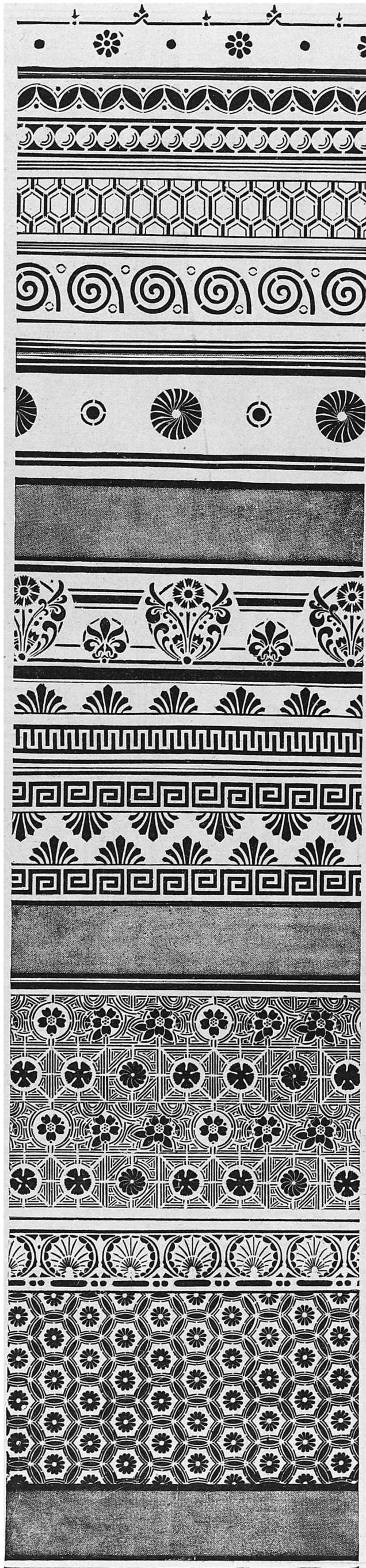
While canopied beds give a stately air to a bedroom, the low, open bed which the French introduced for general use never has been superceded. Almost all bedroom furniture is now of light woods, in deference to the prevailing taste that the tone of a bedroom should be light and cheery. Even the summer hotel, cheap and flimsy structure, sprung up almost in a night, liable to vanish more speedily, has an air of neatness and comfort that a few years ago was unknown in such places, and simply by filling its paper walled chambers with these bedroom sets in light wood, which are now manufactured in really good forms. Nothing in the way of bedroom furniture recently brought out is handsomer and more suitable than the bamboo sets. They are warranted to outlast generations, and this they have need to do since they are so expensive that only a philanthropist looking out for posterity feels justified in getting them.

Next to sleeping and washing conveniences no article ranks in the bedroom before the mirrors. The magnificent dressing-cases that are now built, for their proportions are so great that they seem to be rather pieces of architecture than a development of bureaus, testify to this. It is not necessary to consider these, since every furniture shop furnishes in modern terms any number of "styles." Every bedroom requires a mirror long enough to take in the entire figure. One of the best arrangements for this is the swinging mirror on a standard, which one rarely finds now except in old fashioned houses and at an occasional sale of artists effects. They can be made, however, by any skillful carpenter given the required glass. They should be framed in plain flat frames of the same wood of the furniture, and hung on plainly turned standards, and cost not a tithe of the colossal dressing-case. There is a decided taste prevailing for the small dressers which were in vogue during our grandmothers days. These differ somewhat from the gay Pompadour dressing tables, and are more suitable for some rooms. They are high stands with one or two shelves, and support a small swinging glass and drawers. But they are not as ornamental as the frames that are draped with cretonnes, or whatever drapery is used in the room, with the toilet glass set above in the old fashioned way.

The Pompadour tables are low, and intended to be used with a chair. The glass is hung at the right angle, half canopied above, and a long curtain is thrown over the top and caught back at each side.

These need not be eulogized, since no more dainty, feminine, eloquent adjunct of beauty belongs to the bedroom. Wardrobes are not an essential part of a modern bedroom. Men have come at last to find out that women's desire for a multitude of closets is not to be quenched, and the architect of the present considers it now as seriously as the necessity of back stairs. In rooms constructed before the era of closets, the best substitute is not the clumsy wardrobe, but a sort of framework resembling in everything the present fashion of book shelves, except the shelves, and these may be to a certain extent retained and the space divided into hanging room, shelves, cabinets and drawers. The part of the space allotted to hanging is hung with curtains that are heavy enough to shut out the dust as completely as do doors.

But the bedroom should be considered in a sense apart from sleeping and dressing. Except among very fine ladies it does part of the service of the boudoir. It secures retirement, rest in leisure moments, it provides for idle hours; for all such duties no bedroom is



complete that does not contain conveniences for writing, a place for certain favorite books, a well appointed workstand and an easy chair and footstool.

Its more esthetic appointments are matters of individual taste. Every person unconsciously brings about them the sort of things which they most enjoy, and outside of the necessities of the bedroom individual preference must have free play.

So we may recapitulate. Plenty of air and light for bedrooms, cheerful surroundings. The necessary furniture, no more. Necessary furniture comprehends a comfortable bed, ample washstand privileges, mirrors with a view to the hems of dresses and the exigencies of back hair, sufficient hanging room, not for one's self, but for one's wardrobe, and due consideration for hours of retirement and rest, implied by writing materials, books, easy chairs and footstools, and a nook for all that is personally dear.

### STENCILLING.

We show upon this page a series of stencil designs for ceiling and wall decoration. The patterns are all practical and artistic.

Stencilling is a most important operation where a large space of wall has to be covered with the same pattern often repeated. It is, perhaps, more suited to oil than to tempera painting, but in either case the color must be as dry as possible; if it is at all liquid it will run, and utterly spoil the work. If the design is to be often repeated, it is quite worth while to have the design cut in tin, as it is so much more easily cleaned than varnished paper, and never gets broken or "messy." It must be remembered that in many patterns it is necessary to leave little bands to connect various parts of the design. These little blanks are filled in afterwards with color. Where a stencil-plate will not be very much used, cartridge paper will answer the purpose sufficiently well. Draw the design on it, cut it out with a sharp penknife, leaving the ties (the white spaces referred to). Circles can be punched out, which saves a great deal of trouble, besides which they are much more circular than if cut out. The paper is then varnished with knotting varnish, and left for a day or two to harden.

The chief peculiarity of stencilling is the way in which the brush is held. Stencilling brushes have very short, thick round handles; this handle is grasped in the whole hand as a dagger would be, the top of the brush coming out by the thumb, and the bristles by the little finger. It is dipped slightly into very dry color. The stencil-plate is held firmly against the wall by the left hand; it is hardly necessary to say that one must be careful to hold it in the right place, according to guide marks, which one will have already made on the wall, or that, if it is varnished paper, the varnished side must be kept out, unless it is varnished on both sides, which is the better plan. The left hand is placed flat upon the stencil-plate, with the fingers spread out, so as to hold it as firmly and to get as little in the way of the brush as possible. The brush, held dagger-wise, conveys the color through the cuts in the stencil-plate on to the wall, by a series of quick dabs. Do not attempt to paint with long strokes; stencilling is a knack learnt in a few minutes, but one must understand that it is totally unlike ordinary oil-painting. As soon as all the cuts in the stencil-plate are filled in with color, remove the plate carefully, but quickly, taking care not to smudge the edges of the design. The blanks left by the ties must then be filled in. The stencil-plate must be cleaned—if using tempera, it need only be wiped with a cloth; if oils, it will require a little turpentine, or crystal soap, unless the plate is a tin one, when the paint can easily be wiped off it. Place the stencil-plate again in position, so that the marks join the design already completed, and proceed as before.

Stencilling, as it is described here, sounds like a long process; in reality it is a very quick one. A large piece of wall can be covered in an afternoon, and if good guiding lines can be marked on the wall at starting, and the stencil-plate is a tin one and does not require much cleaning, the operation will be found a pleasant and interesting one. Any details, shadows of foliage, etc., in the dado, may be finished by hand. As a rule, distemper colors are body colors, *i. e.*, opaque being mixed with whiting; but if a clear color is desired, glazing is resorted to. Any transparent color can be used for glazing—sienna, vandyke brown, or damp lake mixed with size.